

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE.

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SPEECH

BY THE LATE

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,

AT THE

FREE TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER,

APRIL 3, 1872.

1872
April 3
Beaconsfield
Free Trade Hall
Manchester
Gentlemen,—The Chairman has correctly reminded you that this is not the first time my voice has sounded in this hall, but that was on occasions very different from that which now assembles us together, when nearly thirty years ago I endeavoured to stimulate the flagging energies of an institution in which I thought there were germs of future refinement and intellectual advantage to the rising generation of Manchester, and since I have been here I have learned with much gratification that it is now counted among your most flourishing institutions. There was also another and more recent occasion, when the gracious office fell to me to distribute, among the members of the Mechanics' Institution, those prizes which they had gained through their pursuit of letters and science. Gentlemen, these were pleasing offices, and if life consisted only of such offices, you would not have to complain of it; but life has also its masculine duties, and we are assembled here to fulfil some of the most important of these, when, as citizens of a free country, we have met to declare our determination to maintain the Constitution to which we are indebted for our freedom and our welfare. Gentlemen, there seems at first something incongruous that one should be addressing on such a topic the population of so influential and intelligent a county as Lancashire who is not locally connected with it; and I will frankly admit that circumstance did for a long time make me hesitate in accepting your cordial and generous invitation. But after what occurred yesterday; after receiving more than 200 addresses from every part of this great county; after the welcome which then greeted me, I felt that I should not be doing justice to your feelings, I should not be doing my duty to myself, if I any longer considered my presence here to-night to be an act of presumption.

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Gentlemen, though it may not be an act of presumption, it still is, I am told, an act of great difficulty. Our opponents assure us that the Conservative party have no programme, and therefore they must look with much interest to one whom you honour by considering as the

representative of your opinions when he comes forward, at your invitation, to express to you what that programme is. The Conservative party are accused of having no programme. If by a programme is meant a plan to despoil churches and plunder landlords, I admit we have no programme. If by a programme is meant a policy which assails or menaces every institution and every interest, every class and every calling, in the country, I admit we have no programme. But if to have a policy with distinct aims, and these such as most deeply interest the great body of the nation, be a becoming programme for a political party, then, I contend, we have an adequate programme, and one which, here or elsewhere, I shall always be prepared to assert and to vindicate. Gentlemen,

THE PROGRAMME OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

is to maintain the Constitution of the country. I have not come down to Manchester to deliver an essay on the English Constitution; but when the banner of Republicanism is unfurled, when the fundamental principles of our institutions are controverted, I think perhaps it may not be inconvenient that I should make some few practical remarks upon the character of our Constitution—upon that monarchy, limited by the co-ordinate authority of estates of the realm, which, under the title of Queen, Lords, and Commons, has contributed so greatly to the prosperity of this country, and with the maintenance of which I believe that prosperity is bound up. Gentlemen, since the settlement of that Constitution, now nearly two centuries ago, England has never experienced a revolution, though there is no country in which there has been so continuous and such considerable change. How is this? Because the wisdom of your forefathers placed the prize of supreme power without the sphere of human passions. Whatever the struggle of parties, whatever the strife of factions, whatever the excitement and exaltation of the public mind, there has always been something in this country round which all classes and all parties could rally, representing the majesty of law, the administration of justice, and being at the same time the security for every man's rights and the fountain of honour. Now, gentlemen, it is well clearly to comprehend what is meant by a country not having a revolution for two centuries. It means, for that space, the unbroken exercise and enjoyment of the ingenuity of man. It means, for that space, the continuous application of the discoveries of science to his comfort and convenience. It means the accumulation of capital; it means the elevation of labour; it means those fabrics of invention and power which cover the district in which you live, and which supply the requirements of the world; it means the unwearied improvement of that cultivation of the soil which has extracted from a somewhat churlish glebe harvests more exuberant than those furnished by lands nearer to the sun. It means that continuous order which is the only

parent of personal liberty and political rights. And you owe all these, gentlemen, to

THE THRONE.

There is another powerful and most beneficial influence which is also exercised by the Crown. Gentlemen, I am a party man. I believe that, without party, Parliamentary government is impossible. I look upon Parliamentary government as the noblest government in the world, and certainly the one most suited to England. But without the discipline of political connection, animated by the principle of private honour, I feel certain that a popular assembly would sink before the power or the seduction of a Minister. Yet, gentlemen, I am not blind to the faults of party government. It has one great defect. Party has a tendency to warp the intelligence, and there is no Minister, however resolved he may be in treating a great public question, who does not find some difficulty in emancipating himself from the traditionary prejudices under which he has long acted. It is, therefore, an excellence in our Constitution that before a Minister introduces a measure to Parliament, he must submit it to an intelligence superior to all party, and entirely free from influences of that character. I know it will be said, gentlemen, that, however beautiful in theory,

THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF THE SOVEREIGN

is now absorbed in the responsibility of the Minister. I think you will find there is some fallacy in this view. The principles of the English Constitution do not contemplate the absence of personal influence on the part of the Sovereign, and if they did, the principles of human nature would prevent the fulfilment of such a theory. I need not tell you that I am now making on this subject abstract observations of general application to our history. But take the case of a Sovereign of England, who accedes to his throne at the earliest age the law permits, and who enjoys a long reign, as, for instance, George the Third. From the earliest moment of his accession that Sovereign is placed in constant communication with the most able statesmen of the period, and of all parties. Even with average ability it is impossible not to perceive that such a Sovereign must soon attain a great mass of political information and political experience. Information and experience, whether they are possessed by a Sovereign or by the humblest of his subjects, are irresistible in life. No man with the vast responsibility that devolves upon an English Minister can afford to treat with indifference a suggestion that has not previously occurred to him, or information with which he had not been previously supplied. But pursue this view of the subject. The longer the reign, the influence of that Sovereign must proportionately increase. All the distinguished statesmen who served his youth disappear. A new generation of public servants rises up. There is a critical conjunc-

ture in affairs—a moment of perplexity and peril. Then it is that the Sovereign can appeal to a similar state of affairs that occurred perhaps 30 years before. When all are in doubt among his servants, he can quote the advice that was given by the illustrious men of his early years; and though he may maintain himself within the strictest limits of the Constitution, who can suppose when such information and such suggestions are made by the most exalted person in the country that they can be without effect? No, gentlemen; a Minister who could venture to treat such suggestions with indifference would not be a Constitutional Minister, but an arrogant idiot. Gentlemen, the influence of the Crown is not confined merely to political affairs. England is a domestic country. Here the home is revered and the hearth is sacred. The nation is represented by a family—

THE ROYAL FAMILY;

and if that family is educated with a sense of responsibility and a sentiment of public duty, it is difficult to exaggerate the salutary influence it may exercise over a nation. It is not merely an influence upon manners; it is not merely that it may be a model for refinement and for good taste—it affects the heart as well as the intelligence of the people; and in the hour of public adversity, or in an anxious conjuncture of public affairs, the nation rallies round the Family and the Throne, and its spirit is animated and sustained by the expression of public affection. There is yet one other remark that I would make upon our Monarchy, though had it not been for recent circumstances I should have refrained from doing so. An attack has recently been made upon the Throne on account of

THE COSTLINESS OF THE INSTITUTION.

Gentlemen, I shall not dwell upon the fact that if the people of England appreciate the Monarchy as I believe they do, it would be painful to them that their Royal and representative family should not be maintained with becoming dignity, or fill in the public eye a position inferior to some of the nobles of the land. Nor will I insist upon what is unquestionably the fact, that revenues of the Crown estates, on which our Sovereign might live with as much right as the Duke of Bedford or the Duke of Northumberland has to his estates, are now paid into the public Exchequer. All this upon the present occasion, I am not going to insist upon. What now say is this, that there is no Sovereignty of any first-rate State which costs so little to the people as the Sovereignty of England. I will not compare our Civil List with those of European Empires, because it is known that in amount they treble and quadruple it

but I will compare it with the cost of Sovereignty in a Republic, and that a Republic with which you are intimately acquainted—

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES

of America. Gentlemen, there is no analogy between the position of our Sovereign, Queen Victoria, and that of the President of the United States. The President of the United States is not the Sovereign of the United States. There is a very near analogy between the position of the President of the United States and that of the Prime Minister of England, and both are paid at much the same rate—the income of a second-class professional man. The Sovereign of the United States is the people; and I will now show you what the Sovereignty of the United States costs. Gentlemen, you are aware of the Constitution of the United States. There are thirty-seven independent States, each with a Sovereign Legislature. Besides these, there is a Confederation of these States, mainly to conduct their external affairs, which consists of the House of Representatives and a Senate. There are 285 members of the House of Representatives, and there are 74 members of the Senate, making altogether 359 members of Congress. Now each member of Congress receives £1,000 sterling per annum. In addition to this he receives an allowance called “mileage,” which varies according to the distance which he travels, but the aggregate cost of which is about £30,000 per annum. That makes £389,000, almost the exact amount of our Civil List. But this, gentlemen, will allow you to make only a very imperfect estimate of the cost of Sovereignty in the United States. Every member of every Sovereign Legislature in the thirty-seven States is also paid. There are, I believe, 5,010 members of State Legislatures who receive about 350 dols. per annum each. As some of the returns are imperfect, the average which I have given of individual payment may be rather high, and therefore I have not counted the “mileage,” which is also universally allowed. 5,010 members of State Legislatures at 350 dols. each make 1,753,500 dols., or £350,700 sterling a year. So you see that the immediate expenditure for the Sovereignty of the United States is between £700,000 and £800,000 a year. *I have strictly confined myself in this estimate to the cost of mere Sovereignty, entirely omitting that of Government.* I have not included the salaries of the President or the Governors of the thirty-seven States, ranging them with those of the administrators of the Union. I have not time to pursue this interesting theme, otherwise I could show you that you have still but imperfectly ascertained the cost of Sovereignty in a Republic. But, gentlemen, I cannot resist giving you one further illustration. The government of this country is considerably carried on by the aid of

ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

So great is the increase of public business that it would be probably impossible for a Minister to carry on affairs without this assistance.

The Queen of England can command for these objects the services of the most experienced statesmen, and men of the highest position in society. If necessary, she can summon to them distinguished scholars or men celebrated in science and in art ; and she receives from them services that are unpaid. They are only too proud to be described in the Commission as her Majesty's " trusty councillors ;" and if any member of these Commissions performs some transcendent services, both of thought and of labour, he is munificently rewarded by public distinction conferred upon him by the Fountain of Honour. Gentlemen, the Government of the United States has, I believe, not less availed itself of the services of Commissions than the Government of the United Kingdom ; but in a country where there is no Fountain of Honour every member of these Commissions is paid. Gentlemen, I trust I have now made some suggestions to you respecting the Monarch of England which at least it may be so far serviceable that when we are separated they may not be altogether without advantage ; and now, gentlemen, I would say something on the subject of

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

It is not merely the authority of the Throne that is now disputed, but the character and influence of the House of Lords are held up by some to public disregard. Gentlemen, I shall not stop for a moment to offer you any proofs of the advantage of a Second Chamber ; and for this reason. That subject has been discussed now for a century, ever since the establishment of the Government of the United States, and all great authorities—American, German, French, Italian—have agreed in this, that a Representative Government is impossible without a Second Chamber. And it has been, especially of late, maintained by eminent political writers in many countries that the repeated failure of the arrangement which is called the French Republic is mainly to be ascribed to its not having a Second Chamber. But, however anxious foreign countries have been to enjoy this advantage, that anxiety has only been equalled by the difficulty which they have found in fulfilling their object. How is a Second Chamber to be constituted ? By nominees of the Sovereign power ? What influence can be exercised by a Chamber of nominees ? It is a proverb of general disrespect. Are they to be supplied by popular election ? In what manner are they to be elected ? If by the same constituency as the popular body, what claim have they, under such circumstances, to criticise or to control the decisions of that body ? If they are to be elected by a more select body, qualified by a higher franchise, there immediately occurs the objection, why should the elected majority be governed by the elected minority ? The United States of America were fortunate in finding a solution of this difficulty ; but the United States of America had elements to deal with which never occurred before, and never probably will occur again, because they formed

their illustrious Senate from the materials that were offered them by the 37 Sovereign States. We, gentlemen, have the House of Lords, an assembly which has historically developed itself in an ancient nation and periodically adapted itself to the wants and necessities of the times. What, gentlemen, is the first quality which is required in a Second Chamber? Without doubt, independence. What is the best foundation of independence? Without doubt, property. The Prime Minister of England has only recently told us, and I believe he spoke quite accurately, that the average income of the members of the House of Lords is £20,000 per annum. Of course there are some who have more and some who have less; but the influence of a public assembly, so far as property is concerned, depends upon its aggregate property, which, in the present case, is a revenue of £9,000,000 a year. But, gentlemen, you must look to the nature of this property. It is visible property, and therefore it is responsible property, which every ratepayer in this room knows to his cost. But, gentlemen, it is not only visible property; it is, generally speaking, territorial property; and one of the elements of territorial property is that it is representative. Now, for illustration, suppose—which God forbid—there was no House of Commons, and some Englishman—I will take him from either end of the island—a Cumberland or a Cornish man, finds himself aggrieved. The Cumbrian says, “This conduct I experience is most unjust. I know a Cumberland man in the House of Lords, the Earl of Carlisle or the Earl of Lonsdale; I will go to him; he will never see a Cumberland man ill-treated.” The Cornish man will say: “I will go to the Lord of Port Eliot; his family have sacrificed themselves before this for the liberties of Englishmen, and he will get justice done me.” So if there were, unhappily, no House of Commons, in every part of England where a man was in trouble he would remember that, from the very nature of representative property, there must be in the House of Lords a man connected with his county, with all the local influences which so largely contribute to the peculiar character of Englishmen. But the charge against the House of Lords is that the dignities are hereditary; and we are told that if we are to have a House of Peers they should be

PEERS FOR LIFE.

There are great authorities in favour of this, and even my noble friend near me, with whom I rarely differ on any subject, the other day gave in his adhesion to a limited application of this principle, and on grounds no doubt highly deserving of consideration, that political requirements lead to the creation of what may be styled pauper peerages. One word on that. No doubt there are some members of the House of Lords who cannot manage their own affairs. And the same observation equally applies to some members of the House of Commons: and I suppose this will always happen

so long as we have an assembly formed of flesh and blood, and not of paper. But I must say this, that so far as I can observe, it is not any of those peers created for official considerations who have given rise to any scandal of this kind. I know no instance of pauper peerages being obtruded on public attention. Generally speaking they have been noblemen of ancient lineage and large estate. But I have a word to say on the subject of what are called peers for life. Now, in the first place, let me observe that every peer is a peer for life, as he cannot be a peer after his death; but some peers for life are succeeded in their dignities by their children. The question arises, who is most responsible—a peer for life whose dignities are not descendible, or a peer for life whose dignities are hereditary? Now, a peer for life is in a very strong position. He says: “Here I am; I have got power and I will exercise it.” I have no doubt that, on the whole, a peer for life would exercise it for what he deemed was the public good. Let us hope that. But, after all, he might, and could, exercise it according to his own will, which might be perverse and headstrong. Nobody can call him to account; he is independent of everybody. But a peer for life whose dignities descend is in a very different position. He has every inducement to study public opinion, and, when he believes it just, to yield to it; because he naturally feels that if the order to which he belongs is in constant collision with public opinion, the chances are that his dignities will not descend to his posterity. Therefore, gentlemen, I am not prepared myself to believe that a solution of any difficulties in the public mind on this point is to be found by creating peers for life. I know there are some philosophers who believe that the best substitute for the House of Lords would be an assembly formed of ex-Governors of Colonies. I have not sufficient experience on that subject to give a decided opinion upon it. When the Muse of Comedy threw her frolic grace over society a retired Governor was generally one of the characters in every play; and the last of our great actors—who, by-the-by, was a great favourite at Manchester, Mr. Farren—was celebrated for his delineation of the character in question. Whether it be the recollection of the performance or not, I confess I am inclined to believe that an English gentleman—born to business, managing his own estate, administering the affairs of his county, mixing with all classes of his fellow-men, now in the hunting field, now in the railway direction, unaffected, unostentatious, proud of his ancestors, if they have contributed to the greatness of our common country—is, on the whole, more likely to form a senator agreeable to English opinion and English taste than any substitute that has yet been proposed. Gentlemen, let me make one observation more on the subject of the House of Lords. There is some advantage in political experience. I remember the time when there was a similar outcry against the House of Lords, but much more intense and powerful; and it arose

from the same cause. A Liberal Government had been installed in office, with an immense Liberal majority. They proposed violent measures. The House of Lords modified some, delayed others, and some they threw out. Instantly there was a cry to abolish or to reform the House of Lords, and the greatest popular orator that probably ever existed was sent on a pilgrimage over England to excite the people in favour of this opinion. What happened? That happened, gentlemen, which may happen to-morrow. There was a dissolution of Parliament. The great Liberal majority vanished. The balance of parties was restored. It was discovered that the House of Lords had behind them at least half of the English people. We heard no more cries for their abolition or their reform; and before two years had passed England was really governed by the House of Lords, under the wise influence of the Duke of Wellington and the commanding eloquence of Lord Lyndhurst; and such was the enthusiasm of the nation in favour of the Second Chamber that at every public meeting its health was drunk, with the additional sentiment for which we are indebted to one of the most distinguished members that ever represented a Lancashire borough, "Thank God, we have a House of Lords." Gentlemen, you will perhaps not be surprised that, having made some remarks upon the Monarchy and the House of Lords, I should say something respecting that House in which I have literally passed the greater part of my life, and to which I am devotedly attached. It is not likely, therefore, that I should say anything to depreciate the legislative position and influence of

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Gentlemen, it is said that the diminished influence of the Throne and the assailed authority of the House of Lords are owing to the increased power of the House of Commons, and the new position which of late years, and especially during the last forty years, it has assumed in the English Constitution. Gentlemen, the main power of the House of Commons depends upon its command over the public purse and its control of the public expenditure; and if that power is possessed by a party which has a large majority in the House of Commons, the influence of the House of Commons is proportionately increased, and, under some circumstances, becomes even predominant. But, gentlemen, this power of the House of Commons is not a power which has been created by any Reform Act, from the days of Lord Grey in 1832 to Lord Derby in 1867. It is a power which the House of Commons has enjoyed for centuries—which it has frequently asserted and sometimes even tyrannically asserted. The House of Commons represents the constituency of England, and I am here to show that no addition to the elements of that constituency has placed the House of Commons in a different relation to the Throne and the House of Lords from that it has always constitutionally occupied. We speak now on

this subject with great advantage. We recently have had published authentic documents upon this matter, eminently instructive. We have, for example, just published the census of the United Kingdom, and we are now in possession of the last registration of voters for the United Kingdom. Gentlemen, it appears by the census that the population at this time is about 32,000,000. It is shown by the last registration that, after making the usual deductions for deaths, removals, double entries, and so on, the constituency of the United Kingdom may be placed at 2,300,000. So, gentlemen, it at once appears that there are nearly 30,000,000 people in this country who are as much represented by the House of Lords as by the House of Commons, and who, for the protection of their rights, must mainly depend upon the majesty of the Throne. And now, gentlemen, I will tell you what was done by

THE LAST REFORM ACT.

Lord Grey, in his measure of 1832, which was, no doubt, on the whole, a statesmanlike measure, committed a great, and for a time it appeared an irretrievable, error. By that measure he fortified the legitimate influence of the aristocracy, and accorded to the middle classes great and salutary franchises; but he not only made no provision for the representation of the working classes in the Constitution, but he absolutely abolished those ancient franchises which the working classes had enjoyed and exercised from time immemorial. That was the origin of Chartism, and of that electoral uneasiness which existed in this country more or less for thirty years. The Liberal party, I feel it my duty to say, had not acted fairly by this question. In their adversity they held out hopes to the working classes, but when they had a strong Government they either brought forward Bills which were utterly futile, or they laughed their vows to scorn. When Lord Derby became Prime Minister, affairs had arrived at such a point that it was of the first moment that the question should be sincerely dealt with. He had to encounter great difficulties, but he accomplished his purpose with the support of a united party. And, gentlemen, what has been the result? In 1848 there was a French Revolution, and a Republic was established. No one can have forgotten what the effect was in this country. I remember one day when no woman could leave her house in London, and when cannon were planted on Westminster Bridge. A year ago there was another revolution in France, and a Republic was again established of the most menacing character. What happened in this country? You could not get half-a-dozen men to assemble in a street and grumble. Why? Because the people had got what they wanted. They were content and they were grateful.

But, gentlemen, the Constitution of England is not merely a Constitution in State, it is a Constitution in

CHURCH AND STATE.

The wisest Sovereigns and statesmen have ever been anxious to connect authority with religion—some to increase their power, some, perhaps, to mitigate its exercise. But the same difficulty has been experienced in effecting this union which has been experienced in forming a Second Chamber—either the spiritual power has usurped upon the civil and established a sacerdotal society, or the civil power has invaded successfully the rights of the spiritual and the ministers of religion have been degraded into stipendiaries of the State and instruments of the Government. In England we accomplished this great result by an alliance between Church and State, between two originally independent powers. I will not go into the history of that alliance, which is rather a question for those archaeological societies which occasionally amuse and instruct the people of this city. Enough for me that that union was made and has contributed for centuries to the civilisation of this country. Gentlemen, there is the same assault against the Church of England and the union between the State and the Church as there is against the Monarchy and against the House of Lords. It is said that the existence of Nonconformity proves that the Church is a failure. I draw from these premises an exactly contrary conclusion; and I maintain that to have secured the blessing of

A NATIONAL PROFESSION OF FAITH

with the unlimited enjoyment of private judgment in matters spiritual is the solution of the most difficult problem and one of the triumphs of civilisation. It is said that the existence of parties in the Church also proves its incompetence. On that matter, too, I entertain a contrary opinion. Parties have always existed in the Church; and some have appealed to them as arguments in favour of its Divine institution, because in the services and doctrines of the Church have been found representatives of every mood in the human mind. Those who are influenced by ceremonies find consolation in forms which secure to them "the beauty of holiness." Those who are not satisfied except with enthusiasm reach in its ministrations the exaltation they require; while others who believe that the anchor of faith can never be safely moored except in the dry sands of reason are welcomed by a religion within the pale of the Church which can boast of its irrefragable logic and its irresistible evidence. I am inclined sometimes to believe that those who advocate the abolition of the union between Church and State have not carefully considered the consequences of such a course. The Church is a powerful corporation of many millions of her Majesty's subjects, with a consummate organisation and wealth which in its aggregate is vast. Controlled by the State, so powerful a corporation may be only fruitful of public advantage, but it

becomes a great question what might be the consequence of the severance of the controlling tie between these two bodies. The State would be enfeebled, but the Church would probably be strengthened. Whether that is a result to be desired is a grave question for all men. For my own part, I am bound to say that I doubt whether it would be favourable to the cause of civil and religious liberty. I know that there is a common idea that if the union between Church and State was severed, the wealth of the Church would revert to the State ; but it would be well to remember that the great proportion of ecclesiastical property is the property of individuals. Take, for example, the fact that the mass of

CHURCH PATRONAGE

is patronage in the hands of private persons. That you could not touch without compensation to the patrons. You have established that principle in your late Irish Bill, where there was very little private patronage to deal with. And in the present state of the public mind on this subject there is little doubt that there would be scarcely a patron in England—irrespective of other aid the Church would receive—who would not dedicate his compensation to the spiritual wants of his neighbours. It was computed some years ago that the property of the Church, in this manner, if the union was terminated, would not be less than between £80,000,000 and £90,000,000 ; and since that period the amount of private property dedicated to the purposes of the Church has largely increased. I trust that when the occasion offers for the country to speak out, it will speak out in an unmistakable manner on this subject ; and, recognising the inestimable services of the Church, that it will call upon the Government to maintain its union with the State. Upon this subject there is one remark I would make. Nothing is more surprising to me than the plea on which the present outcry is made against the Church of England. I could not believe that in the 19th century the charge against the Church of England should be that Churchmen, and especially the clergy, had

EDUCATED THE PEOPLE.

If I were to fix upon one circumstance more than another which redounded to the honour of Churchmen, it is that they should fulfil this noble office ; and, next to being “the stewards of Divine mysteries,” I think the greatest distinction of the clergy is the admirable manner in which they have devoted their lives and their fortunes to this first of national objects. You are well acquainted in this city with this controversy. It was in this city—perhaps in this hall—that the remarkable meeting was held of the Nonconformists to effect important alterations in the Education Act, and you are acquainted with the discussion in Parliament which arose in consequence of that meeting. I have due and great respect for the Nonconformist

body. I acknowledge their services to their country; and though I believe that the political reasons which mainly called them into existence have entirely ceased, it is impossible not to treat with consideration a body which has been eminent for its conscience, its learning, and its patriotism. So far as I am concerned, if I could have found that in the Education Act of last year any injustice had been done to the Nonconformists, I should have voted with them. But after puzzling my mind on the subject, I am at a loss to discover a single ground for their complaints. There is no favour under that Act shown to Churchmen which is not shared by Dissenters. Equally the Churchman and the Dissenter may establish his school. Equally, if necessary, the minority can find the protection of a Conscience Clause. I must express my mortification that, from a feeling of envy, or, at least, of pique, the Nonconformist body, rather than assist the Church in their great enterprise, should absolutely have become the partisans of a merely secular education. I hold that a national system of education not founded on the recognition of the providential government of the world would lead to national disaster, and I feel confident that it is impossible to stop at that mere recognition. The human mind will arrive at conclusions which you may call formularies and dogmas and proscribe by Acts of Parliament; but the conscience of man is more powerful than Acts of Parliament; and I am persuaded a system of national education which repudiates the religious instincts of our nature will be the greatest of failures, but more fatal to the State than to the Church. I should like, on this subject, to see the Church and the Nonconformists work together; but I trust, whatever may be the result, the country will stand by the Church in its efforts to maintain the religious education of the people. Gentlemen, I foresee yet trials for the Church of England; but I am confident in its future. I am confident in its future because I believe there is now a very general feeling that to be national it must be comprehensive. I will not use the epithet "broad," because that is an ambiguous epithet which may denote a sinister design. But I would wish Churchmen, and especially the clergy, always to remember that in our "Father's house there are many mansions," and I believe that comprehensive spirit is perfectly consistent with the maintenance of formularies and the belief in dogmas without which I hold no practical religion can exist.

MR. GLADSTONE'S CONDUCT.

Gentlemen, I have now endeavoured to express to you my general views upon the most important subjects that can interest Englishmen. They are subjects upon which, in my mind, a man should speak with frankness and clearness to his countrymen; and although I do not come down here to make a party speech, I am bound to say that the manner in which these matters are treated

by the leading subject of this realm is to me most unsatisfactory. Although the Prime Minister of England is always writing letters and making speeches, and particularly on these topics, he seems to me ever to send forth an "uncertain sound." If a member of Parliament announces himself a Republican, Mr. Gladstone takes the earliest opportunity of describing him as a "fellow-labourer" in public life. If an inconsiderate multitude calls for the abolition or reform of the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone says that it is no easy task, and that he must think once or twice, or perhaps even thrice, before he can undertake it. If your neighbour, the member for Bradford, Mr. Miall, brings forward a motion in the House of Commons for the severance of Church and State, Mr. Gladstone assures Mr. Miall, with the utmost courtesy, that he believes the opinion of the House of Commons is against him; but that if Mr. Miall wishes to influence the House of Commons he must address the people out of doors; whereupon Mr. Miall immediately calls a public meeting, and alleges as its cause the advice he has just received from the Prime Minister.

But, gentlemen, after all, the test of political institutions is

THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY

whose fortunes they regulate; and I do not mean to evade that test. You are the inhabitants of an island of no colossal size; which, geographically speaking, was intended by nature as the appendage of some continental empire—either of Gauls and Franks on the other side of the Channel, or of Teutons and Scandinavians beyond the German Sea. Such, indeed, and for a long period, was your early history. You were invaded, pillaged, and conquered; yet amid all these perils and vicissitudes there was gradually formed that English race which has brought about a very different state of affairs. Instead of being invaded, your land is proverbially the only inviolate land—"the inviolate island of the sage and free." Instead of being plundered, you have attracted to your shores all the capital of the world. Instead of being conquered, your flag floats on many waters, and your standard waves in either zone. It may be said that these achievements are due to the race that inhabits the land, and not to its institutions. Gentlemen, political institutions are the embodied experience of a race. You have established a society of classes which give vigour and variety to life. But no class possesses a single privilege, and all are equal before the law. You possess a real aristocracy, open to all who deserve to enter it. You have not merely a middle class, but a hierarchy of middle classes, in which every degree of wealth, refinement, industry, energy, and enterprise is duly represented. And now what is the condition of the great body of the people? In the first place, they have for centuries been in the full enjoyment of that which no other country in Europe has even now completely attained—complete rights of personal freedom. In the second place, there has been a

gradual, and therefore a wise, distribution, on a large scale, of political rights. Speaking with reference to the industries of this part of the country, I can personally contrast it with the condition of

THE WORKING CLASSES

forty years ago. In that period they have attained two vast results—the raising of their wages and the diminution of their toil. Increased means and increased leisure are the two civilisers of man. That the working classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire have proved not unworthy of those boons may be fairly maintained; but their progress and elevation have been during this interval wonderfully aided and assisted by three causes, which are not so distinctly attributable to their own energies. The first is the revolution in locomotion, which has opened the world to the working man, which has enlarged the horizon of his experience, increased his knowledge of nature and of art, and added immensely to the salutary recreation and pleasure of his existence. The second cause is the cheap postage, the moral benefits of which cannot be exaggerated. And the third is that unshackled press which has furnished him with endless sources of instruction, information, and amusement. Gentlemen, if you would permit me, I would now make an observation upon another class of the labouring population. This is not a civic assembly, although we meet in a city. That was for convenience, but the invitation which I received was to meet the county and all the boroughs of Lancashire; and I wish to make a few observations upon the condition of

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

That is a subject which now greatly attracts public attention. And, in the first place, to prevent any misconception, I beg to express my opinion that an agricultural labourer has as much right to combine for the bettering of his condition as a manufacturing labourer or worker in metals. If the causes of his combination are natural—that is to say, if they arise from his own feelings and from the necessities of his own condition, the combination will end in results mutually beneficial to employers and employed. If, on the other hand, it is factitious, and he is acted upon by extraneous influences and extraneous ideas, the combination will produce, I fear, much loss and suffering both to employers and employed; and after a time he will find himself in a similar or in a worse position. In my opinion, the farmers of England, as a body, cannot afford to pay higher wages than they do, and those who will answer me by saying that they must find their ability in the reduction of rents are, I think, involving themselves with economic laws which may prove too difficult for them to cope with. The profits of a farmer are very moderate. The interest upon capital invested in land is the smallest that any property furnishes. The farmer will have his profits and the investor in land will have his interest, even though they may be obtained at the cost

of changing the mode of the cultivation of the country. Gentlemen, I should deeply regret to see the tillage of this country reduced, and a recurrence to pasture take place. I should regret it principally on account of the agricultural labourers themselves. Their new friends call them Hodge, and describe them as feeble in body and stolid in mind. That is not my experience of them. I believe them to be a stalwart race, sufficiently shrewd and open to reason. I would say to them with confidence, as the great Athenian said to the Spartan who rudely assailed him, "Strike, but hear me." A change in the cultivation of the soil of this country would be very injurious to the labouring class; and, secondly, I am of opinion that that class, instead of being stationary, have made, if not as much progress as the manufacturing class, very considerable progress during the last forty years. Many persons write and speak about the agricultural labourer with not so perfect a knowledge of his condition as is desirable. They treat him always as a human being who in every part of the country finds himself in an identical condition. Now, on the contrary, there is no class of labourers in which there is greater variety of condition than the agricultural. It changes from north to south, from east to west, and from county to county. It changes even in the same county, where there is an alteration of soil and of the configuration of the land. The hind in Northumberland is in a very different condition from the famous Dorsetshire labourer—the tiller of the soil in Lincolnshire is different from his fellow agriculturist in Sussex. What the effect of manufactures is upon the agricultural districts in their neighbourhood it would be presumption in me to dwell upon—your own experience must tell you whether the agricultural labourer in North Lancashire, for example, has had no rise in wages and no diminution in toil. As for the Dorsetshire labourer, the whole of the agricultural labourers on the south-western coast of England, for a very long period, worked only half the time of the labourers in other parts of England, and received only half the wages. In the experience of many, I dare say, who are here present, only thirty years ago a Dorsetshire labourer never worked after three o'clock in the day; and why? Because the whole of that part of England was demoralised by smuggling. No one worked after three o'clock in the day for a very good reason—because he had to work at night. No farmer allowed his team to be employed after three o'clock, because he reserved his horses to take his illicit cargo at night and carry it rapidly into the interior. Therefore, as the men were employed and remunerated otherwise, they got into a habit of half-work and half-pay so far as the land was concerned, and when smuggling was abolished—and it has only been abolished thirty years—these imperfect habits of labour continued, and do even now continue to some extent. That is the origin of the condition of the agricultural labourer in the south-western part of England. But now, gentlemen, I want to test the condition of the agricultural labourer generally; and I will

take a part of England with which I am familiar, and can speak as to the accuracy of the facts—I mean the group described as the south-midland counties. The conditions of labour there are the same, or pretty nearly the same, throughout. The group may be described as a strictly agricultural community, and they embrace a population of probably a million and a half. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that the improvement in their lot during the last forty years has been progressive and is remarkable. I attribute it to three causes. In the first place, the rise in their money wages is no less than fifteen per cent. The second great cause of their improvement is the almost total disappearance of excessive and exhausting toil, from the general introduction of machinery. I don't know whether I could get a couple of men who could, or, if they could, would thrash a load of wheat in my neighbourhood. The third great cause which has improved their condition is the very general, not to say universal, institution of allotment grounds. Now, gentlemen, when I find that this has been the course of affairs in a considerable and strictly agricultural portion of the country, where there have been no exceptional circumstances, like smuggling, to degrade and demoralise the race, I cannot resist the conviction that the condition of the agricultural labourers, instead of being stationary, as we are constantly told by those not acquainted with them, has been one of progressive improvement; and that in those counties—and they are many—where the stimulating influence of a manufacturing neighbourhood acts upon the land, the general conclusion at which I arrive is that the agricultural labourer has had his share in the advance of national prosperity. I am not here to maintain that there is nothing to be done to increase the well-being of the working classes of this country. Generally speaking, there is not a single class in the country which is not susceptible of improvement; and that makes the life and animation of our society. But in all we do we must remember, as my noble friend told them at Liverpool, that much depends upon the working classes themselves; and what I know of the working classes in Lancashire makes me sure that they will respond to this appeal. Much also may be expected from that sympathy between classes which is a distinctive feature of the present day; and, in the last place, no inconsiderable results may be obtained by judicious and prudent legislation. But in attempting to legislate upon social matters, the great object is to be practical—to have before us some distinct aims and some distinct means by which those aims can be accomplished. I think public attention as regards these matters ought to be concentrated upon

SANITARY LEGISLATION.

That is a wide subject, and, if properly treated, comprises almost every consideration which has a just claim upon legislative interference. Pure air, pure water, the inspection of unhealthy habitations, the adulteration of food—these and many kindred

matters may be legitimately dealt with by the Legislature ; and I am bound to say that the Legislature is not altogether idle upon them, for we have at this time two measures before Parliament on the subject. One—by a late colleague of mine, Sir Charles Adderley—is a large and comprehensive measure, founded upon a sure basis, for it consolidates all existing public Acts and improves them. A prejudice has been raised against that proposal, by stating that it interferes with the private Acts of the great towns. I take this opportunity of contradicting that. The Bill of Sir Charles Adderley does not touch the Acts of the great towns. It only allows them, if they think fit, to avail themselves of its new provisions. The other measure, by the Government, is of a partial character. What it comprises is good, so far as it goes, but it shrinks from that bold consolidation of existing Acts which I think one of the great merits of Sir Charles Adderley's Bill, which permits us to become acquainted with how much may be done in favour of sanitary improvement by existing provisions. Gentlemen, I cannot impress upon you too strongly my conviction of the importance of the Legislature and society uniting together in favour of these results. A great scholar and a great wit 300 years ago said that, in his opinion, there was a mistake in the Vulgate, which, as you all know, is the Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures, and that, instead of saying "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"—*Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*—the wise and witty King really said, *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*. It is impossible to overrate the importance of the subject. After all, the first consideration of a Minister should be the health of the people. A land may be covered with historic trophies, with museums of sciences and galleries of art, with universities and with libraries ; the people may be civilised and ingenious ; the country may be even famous in the annals and action of the world ; but, gentlemen, if the population every ten years decreases, and the stature of the race every ten years diminishes, the history of that country will soon be the history of the past.

Gentlemen, I said I had not come here to make a party speech. I have addressed you upon subjects of grave, and I will venture to believe of general interest ; but to be here and altogether silent upon the present

STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

would not be respectful to you, and, perhaps, on the whole, would be thought incongruous. I cannot pretend that our position either at home or abroad is in my opinion satisfactory. At home, at a period of immense prosperity, with a people contented and naturally loyal, we find to our surprise the most extravagant doctrines professed and the fundamental principles of our most valuable institutions impugned, and that, too, by persons of some authority. This

startling inconsistency is accounted for, in my mind, by the circumstances under which the present Administration was formed. It is the first instance in my knowledge of a British Administration being avowedly formed on a principle of violence. It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the circumstances which preceded the formation of that Government. You were the principal scene and theatre of the development of statesmanship that then occurred. You witnessed the incubation of the portentous birth. You remember when you were informed that the means to secure the prosperity of

IRELAND

and the content of Irishmen were sacrilege and confiscation. When Ireland was placed under the wise and able administration of Lord Abercorn, Ireland was prosperous and I may say content. But there happened at that time a very peculiar conjuncture in politics. The civil war in America had just ceased; and a band of military adventurers—Poles, Italians, and many Irishmen—concocted at New York a conspiracy to invade Ireland, with the belief that the whole country would rise to welcome them. How that conspiracy was baffled, how those plots were confounded, I need not now remind you. For that we were mainly indebted to the eminent qualities of a great man who has just left us. You remember how the constituencies were appealed to to vote against the Conservative Government who had made so unfit an appointment as that of Lord Mayo to the Viceroyalty of India. It was by his great qualities when Secretary for Ireland, his vigilance, his courage, his patience, and his resources, that this conspiracy was defeated. Never was a Minister better informed. He knew what was going on at New York just as well as what was going on in the city of Dublin. When the Fenian conspiracy had been entirely put down it became necessary to consider the policy which it was expedient to pursue in Ireland; and it seemed to us at that time that what Ireland required after all the excitement which it had experienced was a policy which should largely develop its material resources. There were one or two subjects of a different character which, for the advantage of the State, it would have been desirable to have settled, if that could have been effected with the general concurrence of both the great parties in that country. Had we remained in office that would have been done. But we were destined to quit it, and we quitted it without a murmur. The policy of our successors was different. Their specific was to despoil Churches and plunder landlords, and what has been the result? Sedition rampant, treason thinly veiled, and whenever a vacancy occurs in the representation a candidate is returned pledged to the disruption of the realm. Her Majesty's new Ministers proceeded in their career like a body of men under the influence of some delirious drug. Not satiated with the spoliation and anarchy of Ireland, they began to attack every institution and every interest, every class and calling

in the country. It is curious to observe their course. They took into hand

THE ARMY.

What have they done? I will not even comment on what they have done. I will historically state it, and leave you to draw the inference. So long as Constitutional England has existed there has been a jealousy among all classes against the existence of a standing army. As our Empire expanded and the existence of a large body of disciplined troops became a necessity, every precaution was taken to prevent the danger to our liberties which a standing army involved. It was a first principle not to concentrate in the island any overwhelming number of troops, and a considerable portion was distributed in the colonies. Care was taken that the troops generally should be officered by a class of men deeply interested in the property and the liberties of England. So extreme was the jealousy that the relations between that once constitutional force, the Militia, and the Sovereign were rigidly guarded, and it was carefully placed under local influences. All this is changed. We have a standing army of large amount, quartered, and barracked, and encamped permanently in England, and fed by a considerable and constantly increasing Reserve. It will in due time be officered by a class of men eminently professional, but with no relations necessarily with general society; while the Militia is withdrawn from all local influences, and placed under the immediate command of the Secretary of War. Thus, in the nineteenth century, we have a large standing army established in England, contrary to all the traditions of the land, and that by a Liberal Government, and with the warm acclamations of the Liberal party. Let us look to what they have done with the navy. You remember, in this country especially, the denunciations of the profligate expenditure of the Conservative Government in this respect, and you have since had an opportunity of comparing it with the gentler burden of Liberal estimates.

THE NAVY

was not merely an instance of profligate expenditure, but of incompetent and inadequate management. A great revolution was promised in its administration. A gentleman, almost unknown to English politics, was strangely preferred to one of the highest places in the councils of her Majesty. He set to at his task with ruthless activity. The Consultative Council, under which Nelson had gained all his victories, was dissolved. The Secretaryship of the Admiralty, an office which exercised a complete supervision over every division of that great department—an office which was to the Admiralty what the Secretary of State is to the kingdom, which, in the qualities which it required and the duties which it fulfilled, was rightly a stepping-stone to the Cabinet, as in the instances of Lord Halifax, Lord Herbert, and others—was re-

duced to absolute insignificance. Even the Office of Control, which of all others required a position of independence, and on which the safety of the navy mainly depended, was deprived of most of its important attributes. For two years the Opposition called the attention of Parliament to these destructive changes, but Parliament and the nation were alike insensible. Full of other business, they could not give a thought to what they looked upon merely as captious criticism. It requires a great disaster to command the attention of England; and when the *Captain* was lost, and when they hung on the details of the perilous voyage of the *Megara*, then public indignation demanded a complete change in this reforming administration of the navy. And what has occurred? It is only a few weeks since that in the House of Commons I heard the naval statement made by a new First Lord, and it consisted only of the rescinding of all the revolutionary changes of his predecessor, every one of which during the last two years has been pressed upon the attention of Parliament and the country by that constitutional and necessary body, the Opposition. Gentlemen, it will not do for me—considering time the I have already occupied, and there are still some subjects of importance that must be touched—to dwell upon any of the other similar topics of which there is a rich abundance. I doubt not there is in this hall more than one farmer who has been alarmed by the suggestion that Agricultural Machinery was to be taxed. I doubt not there is in this hall more than one publican who remembers that last year an Act of Parliament was introduced to declare that all publicans were sinners. I doubt not there are in this hall a widow and an orphan who remember the profligate proposition to plunder their lonely heritage. But, gentlemen, as time advanced it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being substituted for energy by the Government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding. Their paroxysms ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sit opposite the Treasury Bench, the Ministers remind me of one of those marine landscapes not unusual on the coast of South America. You behold a range of

EXHAUSTED VOLCANOES.

Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea.

There is one other topic on which I must touch. If the management of our domestic affairs has been founded upon a principle of violence, that certainly cannot be alleged against the management of our external relations. I know the difficulty of addressing a body of Englishmen on these topics. The very phrase

“FOREIGN AFFAIRS”

makes an Englishman convinced that I am about to treat of subjects

with which he has no concern. Unhappily, the relations of England to the rest of the world, which are "foreign affairs," are the matters which most influence his lot. Upon them depends the increase or reduction of taxation. Upon them depends the enjoyment or the embarrassment of his industry. And yet, though so momentous are the consequences of the mismanagement of our foreign relations, no one thinks of them till the mischief occurs, and then it is found how the most vital consequences have been occasioned by mere inadvertence. I will illustrate this point by two anecdotes. Since I have been in public life there has been for this country one great calamity and there is one great danger, and both might have been avoided. The calamity was

THE CRIMEAN WAR.

You know what were the consequences of the Crimean War—a great addition to your debt, an enormous addition to your taxation, a cost more precious than your treasure—the best blood of England. Half a million of men, I believe, perished in that undertaking. Nor are the evil consequences of that war adequately described by what I have said. All the disorders and disturbances of Europe, those immense armaments that are an incubus on national industry and the great obstacle to progressive civilisation, may be traced and justly attributed to the Crimean War. And yet the Crimean War need never have occurred. When Lord Derby acceded to office, against his own wishes, in 1852, the Liberal party most unconstitutionally forced him to dissolve Parliament by stopping the supplies, or at least by limiting the period for which they were voted. There was not a single reason to justify that course, for Lord Derby had only accepted office, having once declined it, on the renewed application of his Sovereign. The country, at the dissolution, increased the power of the Conservative party, but did not give to Lord Derby a majority, and he had to retire from power. There was not the slightest chance of a Crimean War when we retired from office; but the Emperor of Russia, believing that the successor of Lord Derby was no enemy to Russian aggression in the East, commenced those proceedings with the result of which you are familiar. I speak of what I know—not of what I believe, but what I have evidence in my possession to prove—that the Crimean War would never have happened if Lord Derby had remained in office. The great danger is the present state of

OUR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

When I was called upon to preside over the Government, I did so, so far as regarded the United States of America, with some advantage. During the whole of the Civil War in America both my noble friend near me and myself had maintained a strict and fair neutrality. This was fully appreciated by the Government of the United States, and they expressed their wish that with our aid the settlement of all differences between the two Governments should be accomplished. They sent here a Plenipotentiary, an honourable gentleman,

intelligent, and possessing general confidence. My noble friend near me, with signal ability, negotiated a Treaty for the settlement of those differences. He was the first Minister who proposed to refer them to arbitration, and the treaty was signed by the American Government. It was signed, I think, on the 10th of November, on the eve of the dissolution of Parliament. The borough elections that first occurred proved what would be the fate of the Ministry, and the moment they were known in America the American Government announced that Mr. Reverdy Johnson had mistaken his instructions, and they could not present the treaty to the Senate for its sanction—the sanction of which with them there had been previously no doubt. But the fact is that, as in the case of the Crimean War, it was supposed that our successors would be favourable to Russian aggression, so it was supposed that by the accession to office of Mr. Gladstone and a gentleman you know well, Mr. Bright, the American claims would be considered in a very different spirit. How they have been considered is a subject which, no doubt, occupies deeply the minds of the people of Lancashire. Now, gentlemen, observe this—the question of the Black Sea involved in the Crimean War, and the question of the American claims involved in our negotiations with Mr. Johnson, are the two questions that have again turned up, and have been the two great questions that have been under the management of this Government. How have they treated them? Prince Gortchakoff, thinking he saw an opportunity, announced his determination to break from

THE TREATY OF PARIS,

and terminate all the conditions hostile to Russia which had been the result of the Crimean War. What was the first movement on the part of our Government is at present a mystery. This we know, that they selected the most rising diplomatist of the day and sent him to Prince Bismarck with a declaration that the policy of Russia, if persisted in, was war with England. Now, gentlemen, there was not the slightest chance of Russia going to war with England, and no necessity, as I shall always maintain, of England going to war with Russia. I believe I am not wrong in stating that the Russian Government were prepared to withdraw from the position they had rashly taken; but suddenly her Majesty's Government, to use a technical phrase, threw over their Plenipotentiary, and, instead of threatening war if the Treaty of Paris was violated, they agreed to arrangements by which the violation of that Treaty should be sanctioned by England, and, in the form of a Congress, they guaranteed their own humiliation. That Mr. Odo Russell really made no mistake is quite obvious, because he has since been selected to be her Majesty's Ambassador at the most important Court of Europe. Gentlemen, what will be the consequence of this extraordinary weakness on the part of the British Government it is difficult to foresee. Already we hear that Sebastopol is to be re-fortified, nor can any

man doubt that the entire command of the Black Sea will in time be in the possession of Russia. The time may not be distant when we may hear of the Russian power in the Persian Gulf, and what effect that may have upon the dominions of England and upon those possessions on the productions of which you every year more and more depend, are questions upon which it will be well for you on proper occasions to meditate.

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS.

I come now to that question which most deeply interests you at this moment, and that is our relations with the United States. I approved the Government referring this question to arbitration. It was only following the policy of Lord Stanley. My noble friend disapproved the negotiations being carried on at Washington. I confess that I would willingly have persuaded myself that that was not a mistake, but reflection has convinced me that my noble friend was right. I remembered the successful negotiation at Washington of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty by Sir Henry Bulwer. I flattered myself that treaties at Washington might be successfully negotiated; but I admit to my noble friend that his views were far more sound than my own. But no one when that Commission was sent forth for a moment could anticipate the course of their conduct under the strict instructions of the Government. We believed that Commission was sent to ascertain what points should be submitted to arbitration, to be decided by the principles of the law of nations. We had not the slightest idea that that Commission was sent with power and instructions to alter the law of nations itself. When that result was announced we expressed our entire disapprobation; and yet, trusting to the representations of the Government that matters were concluded satisfactorily, we had to decide whether it was wise, if the great result was obtained, to wrangle upon points, however important, which could not be recalled. Gentlemen, it appears that, though England was ready to make those sacrifices, the two negotiating States—the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States—placed a different interpretation upon the treaty when the time had arrived to put its provisions into practice. In my mind, and in the opinion of my noble friend near me, there was but one course to take under the circumstances, and that was at once to appeal to the good feeling and good sense of the United States, and, stating the difficulty, to invite confidential conference whether it might not be removed. But her Majesty's Government took a different course. On the 15th of December her Majesty's Government were aware of a contrary interpretation being placed on the Treaty of Washington by the American Government. The Prime Minister received a copy of their Counter Case, which he confessed he had never read. He had a considerable number of copies sent to him to distribute among his colleagues, and you remember, probably, the remarkable state-

ment in which he informed the House how he had distributed those copies to everybody except those for whom they were intended. Some were sent to foreign consuls, and one was sent to Lord Russell! You cannot have forgotten his answer to me on this matter in the House of Commons! Was there ever such a rigmarole? Time went on, and the adverse interpretation of the American Government oozed out, and was noticed by the press. Public alarm and public indignation were excited; and it was only seven weeks after, on the very eve of the meeting of Parliament—some 24 hours before the meeting of Parliament—that her Majesty's Government felt they were absolutely obliged to make a "friendly communication" to the United States that they had arrived at an interpretation of the treaty the reverse of that of the American Government. What was the position of the American Government? Seven weeks had passed without their having received the slightest intimation from her Majesty's Ministers. They had circulated their Case throughout the world. They had translated it into every European language. It had been sent to every Court and Cabinet, to every Sovereign and every Minister. It was impossible for the American Government to recede from their position, even if they had believed it to be an erroneous one. And then, to aggravate the difficulty, the Prime Minister goes down to Parliament, declares that there is only one interpretation to be placed on the treaty, and defies and attacks everybody who believes it susceptible of another. Was there ever such a combination of

NEGLIGENCE AND BLUNDERING?

And now, gentlemen, what is about to happen? All we know is that her Majesty's Ministers are doing everything in their power to evade the cognizance and criticism of Parliament. They have received an answer to their "friendly communication," of which, I believe, it has been ascertained that the American Government adhere to their interpretation; and yet they prolong the controversy. What is about to occur it is impossible for one to predict; but if it be this—if, after a fruitless ratiocination worthy of a schoolman, we ultimately agree so far to the interpretation of the American Government as to submit the whole case to arbitration, with feeble reservation of a protest if it be decided against us, I venture to say that we shall be entering on a course not more distinguished by its feebleness than by its impending peril. There is before us every prospect of the same incompetence that distinguished our negotiations respecting the independence of the Black Sea; and I fear that there is every chance that that incompetence may be sealed by our ultimately acknowledging these indirect claims of the United States, which, both as regards principle and practical results, are fraught with the utmost danger to this country.

Gentlemen, don't suppose, because I counsel

FIRMNESS AND DECISION

at the right moment, that I am of that school of statesmen who are

favourable to turbulent and aggressive diplomacy. I have resisted it during a great part of my life. I am not unaware that the relations of England to Europe have undergone a vast change during the century that has just elapsed. The relations of England to Europe are not the same as they were in the days of Lord Chatham or Frederick the Great. The Queen of England has become the Sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States. On the other side of the globe there are now establishments belonging to her, teeming with wealth and population, which will, in due time, exercise their influence over the distribution of power. The old plantations of this country, now the United States of America, throw their lengthening shades over the Atlantic, and mix with European waters. These are vast and novel elements in the distribution of power. I acknowledge that the

POLICY OF ENGLAND

with respect to Europe should be a policy of reserve, but of proud reserve; and, in answer to those statesmen who have intimated the decay of the power of England and the decline of its resources, I express here my confident conviction that there never was a moment in our history when the power of England was so great and her resources so vast and inexhaustible. And yet, gentlemen, it is not merely our fleets and armies, our powerful artillery, our accumulated capital, and our unlimited credit on which I so much depend, as upon that unbroken spirit of her people, which I believe was never prouder of the imperial country to which they belong. Gentlemen, it is to that spirit that I above all things trust. I look upon the people of Lancashire as a fair representative of the people of England. I think the manner in which they have invited me here, locally a stranger, to receive the expression of their cordial sympathy, and only because they recognise some effort on my part to maintain the greatness of our country, is evidence of the spirit of the land. I must express to you again my deep sense of the generous manner in which you have welcomed me, and in which you have permitted me to express to you my views upon public affairs. Proud of your confidence and encouraged by your sympathy, I now deliver to you as my last words,

THE CAUSE OF THE TORY PARTY, OF THE ENGLISH
CONSTITUTION, AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

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